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100 Years: A Small Measure of Justice



This documentary tells the story of how one woman, Elouise Cobell, a Native American warrior, spent over a decade of her life in battle with the United States government over royalty payments due to land owners whose properties were leased to oil, mineral and timber companies with no regard for the 300,000

residents, who were forced to live in squalor waiting for compensation checks that either never came, came too late or were "lost" in the slipshod record keeping system of the Bureau of Indian Affairs.

The U.S. government was supposed to manage a special trust on behalf of the Indians. What it managed to do instead was to deprive these people of a way to provide for even the most basic needs.

In what can only be described as a systematic effort to avoid payments and to outwait class action lawsuit proceedings, the struggle for justice continued over 14 years and three presidencies. People were literally starved off the land because the government refused to acknowledge their rights or their claims. Enter Elouise Cobell, a woman with banking experience who took on the challenge of fighting a battle that few people would choose to take on. She took on the red tape and the runaround. The sheer determination, persistence and sacrifice that Cobell made to ensure that these Native Americans had a voice should move you and inspire you to fight for what is right whenever you can. She fought to get Native Americans the monetary compensation owed to them over the last 100 years. She won some and lost more.

There are scenes that will move you to tears. How does anyone justify what happened here? I felt ashamed, outraged and deeply moved and saddened by the plight of the



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people who, generation after generation were denied what was promised to them in the name of greed. What other reason could there have been? And while there was indeed a settlement for \$3.5 billion, when you factor in what this chapter in history costs the nation in terms of human suffering, it is a very small measure of justice.

This film needs to be seen. Unfortunately, it is in limited release this week only at the Laemmle on Second Street in Santa Monica and the run ends on Thursday. Please ask for it to be screened at your local theater. Go see it when it comes out so you can understand just how far companies will go to increase the bottom line and how interconnected our government is to the process and the outcome.

I give "100 years: A Small Measure of Justice" five golden tickets.

